



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

# THE PAST AND FUTURE OF COSMOPOLITANISM

PROGRAM

ASANOR CONFERENCE 2018, UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

# PROGRAM

---

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11

---

- 9:00-10:00 Registration [Vrimlehallen, UiA main entrance]
- 10:00-10:20 Introductions [Rm. B2 002]
- 10:20-11:20 Keynote Address:**  
**Cyrus R. K. Patell (NYU Abu Dhabi), "Cosmopolitanism and Knowledge" [Rm. B2 002]**
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch [Fugle fjellet]
- 12:30-1:45 Panel 1A [Rm. F2 001] Moderator: Jan Erik Mustad**  
Agnese Marino (Heidelberg Center for American Studies), "The Ethics of Identity: Cosmopolitanism, the Loving Generation, and Racial Displacement"  
Adam Glaz (Marie Curie-Skłodowska University), "From Hybrid Identities to the Cosmopolitan Self"
- Panel 1B [Rm. F2 007] Moderator: Cassandra Falke**  
Jena Habegger-Conti (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen), "National Allegiance and the Burying of 'American' War Dead"  
Zbigniew Mazur (Marie Curie-Skłodowska University), "Those who gave the greatest benefits to mankind": Representation of Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Other 'Cosmopolitan Patriots' in the American Press, 1776-1830"
- 1:45-2:00 Coffee, tea, etc. [F2 hallway]
- 2:00-3:50 Panel 2A [Rm. F2 001] Moderator: Michael Prince**  
Asbjørn Grønstad (University of Bergen), "Cosmopolitanism and the Right to Opacity"  
Rashi Rohatgi (Nord University), "Teaching Monocultural Cosmopolitans"  
Michael Prince (University of Agder), "AI is a Bitch: The Encoded Uncanny in The Stepford Wives (2004) and EX\_MACHINA (2014)"
- Panel 2B [Rm. F2 007] Moderator: Stephen Dougherty**  
Eir-Anne Edgar, "Teaching Empathy to the Cosmopolitan Reader through Jim Crow" (NTNU)  
Joelle C. Moen (Brigham Young University-Idaho, 2018-2019 Fulbright Roving Scholar in American Studies), "The Variety of Voices in James Weldon Johnson's God's Trombones"  
Nahum Welang (University of Bergen), "The Racial Limitations of Ideological Cosmopolitanism: Examining the Complicated Proletarian Consciousness of Wright, McKay and Hughes"
- 6:00-7:00 Drinks at Radisson Caledonien Skybar (Welcome reception with the ASANOR Board)
- 7:30-9:30 KSO concert at Kilden, "Symphony in Jazz & Jazz in Symphony"
- 

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

---

- 8:30-9:45 Panel 3A [Rm. F2 001] Moderator: Jena Habegger-Conti**  
Izabella Kimak (Marie Curie-Skłodowska University), "Cosmopolitanism Rethought: Bharati Mukherjee's Miss New India"  
Julia Gordina (Universität des Saarlandes), "Trotsky's Rootless Cosmopolitanism": Acknowledging the Otherness in Russian-Jewish-American Literature"
- Panel 3B [Rm. F2 007] Moderator: Ken R. Hanssen**  
Ellen Marie Jensen (UiT Arctic University of Norway), "Laestadianism as Salvation and Cosmopolitan as Road to Hell in Hanna Pylväinen's We Sinners (2012)"  
Jamie Callison (Nord University), "New Orthodoxy: Revisiting T.S. Eliot's Notes Towards the Definition of Culture"

- 9:45-10:00 Coffee, tea, etc. [B2 002]
- 10:00-11:00 Keynote Address:**  
**Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwanko (Vanderbilt University), “Cosmopolitanism Otherwise” [Rm. B2 002]**
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch [Fuglefjellet]
- 12:00-1:50 Panel 4A [Rm. F2 001] Moderator: Susan Erdmann**  
 Janice Bland (Nord University), “Refugee Literature and the Verse Novel for Deep Learning with Teenagers in ELT”  
 Cassandra Falke (UiT Arctic University of Norway), “Reading About Others’ Places: Choosing Cosmopolitanism versus Not Having a Choice”  
 Lene Johannessen (University of Bergen), “Cosmopolitan Promises and Regional Singularity”
- Panel 4B [Rm. F2 007] Moderator: Jan Erik Mustad**  
 On Hee Choi (University of Bristol), “Everyday Cosmopolitanism of International Students”  
 Matthew Teutsch (Auburn University, 2018-2019 Fulbright Scholar, University of Bergen), “The Discussion is Interminable’: Framing the American Literature Survey Course Around Conversations”  
 Helle Marie Andresen (University of Agder), “From Palestinian to Cosmopolitan: Detachment from Homeland in Hala Alyan’s Salt Houses”
- 2:05-3:15 Coffee, tea, etc. [B2 002]
- 2:05-3:05 Keynote Address:**  
**Nicole Waller (University of Potsdam), “The Future of Cosmopolitanism? Examples from the Americas” [Rm. B2 002]**
- 3:20-4:20 Roundtable Discussion 1:**  
**Teaching Current American Political Issues Abroad, Alf Tomas Tønnessen (leader), Brianne Jaquette, Matthew Teutsch, Joelle C. Moen**
- 4:30-6:00 ASANOR Board meeting
- 7:00- Conference Dinner at Scandic Bystranda

---

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

---

- 9:00-10:15 Panel 5 [Rm. F2 001] Moderator: Stephen Dougherty**  
 Stephen Dougherty (University of Agder), “Let’s Stop Teaching the 100-level American Literature Survey in Norway (in the Name of Cosmopolitanism?)”  
 Ken R. Hanssen (Nord University), “To Cheer Up Slaves and Horrify Despots”: American Literature and the Cosmopolitan Ideal”
- 10:15-10:30 Coffee, tea, etc. [F2 hallway]
- 10:30-11:40 Roundtable Discussion 2:**  
**Teaching American Literature in Norway, Jena Habegger-Conti (leader), Cassandra Falke, Lene Johannessen, Stephen Dougherty**
- 11:45-12:45 Lunch [Lilletunstova]
- 12:45-1:45 Business Meeting (ASANOR)

# ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1  
THURSDAY, 10:20-11:20 RM. B2  
002

## **“Cosmopolitanism and Knowledge”**

Cyrus R. K. Patell (NYU Abu Dhabi)

What makes someone a cosmopolitan? And why might it matter to how one lives and learns? In my keynote address I will introduce the history, theory, and practice of cosmopolitan thought, while also exploring how cosmopolitanism might serve as a productive approach to the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Originating in the idea of the world citizen, cosmopolitanism offers not only an alternative to nationalism, but also a way of mediating between the often conflicting claims of universalism and multiculturalism. For some cosmopolitan thinkers, human difference represents an opportunity to be embraced rather than either a problem to be solved or a fact to be tolerated. My discussion will focus in part on the relation between cosmopolitanism and the liberal arts model of education in the context of the globalization of knowledge, information, and culture in the twenty-first century.

PANEL 1A  
THURSDAY, 12:30-1:45, RM. F2 001

## **“The ethics of identity: cosmopolitanism, the Loving Generation, and racial displacement.”**

Agnese Marino, Ph.D. candidate at HCA-Heidelberg  
Center for American Studies, Germany

“The Loving Generation” is the generation of biracial children born in America around 1967, when Loving v. Virginia struck down state laws banning interracial marriage. Inspired by the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement, these unions became symbols of racial reconciliation. However, with racial nationalism again gaining ground, these children remained alone wondering, “Am I possible?” (R. Walker). In a world where multiculturalism has created the illusion of consistent color-coded identities where

biology, community, family, and individual experience perfectly merge (Hollinger 1995), these children are pushed into a state of existential displacement and isolation--a state of, as C. Patell (2016) suggests, never being at home. In this paper, I set out to demonstrate that a suitable theoretical framework for the self-identification of biracial subjects is provided not by multiculturalism, but rather by a new cosmopolitan approach. Focusing on autobiographical works, as providing special insights into the experience of multiracial subjects, I will analyze Rebecca Walker’s Black White and Jewish, Barack Obama’s Dreams From My Father, and Mat Johnson’s Loving Day. I will trace the ways in which these narratives of “nomadic existence” (which recall J. Clifford’s notion of discrepant cosmopolitanism), starting from a fragmented, multilayered sense of Self and moving across circles of family, community, race, and national boundaries, construct an identity based on human relationality rather than on the discovery of ontological “authenticity” and learn to emphasize shared points rather than obvious differences. Thus, a new multiracial model of identity arises from the experience of transformative, intersubjective encounters with the cultural Other within and outside the U.S.. Pushed by an ethical spirit that is intrinsically cosmopolitan, these narratives in turn reach readers all around the world, creating bonds of identification and solidarity with whoever needs to find a home in the world.

## **“From Hybrid Identities to the Cosmopolitan Self”**

Adam Głaz, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University  
(UMCS), Lublin, Poland

The complexities of contemporary life have led to the recognition of the so-called hybrid identities, defined in terms of the Third Space (Bhabha 1994) that constitutes a unique context beyond those that have led to its emergence. However, hybridity is often erroneously claimed to obtain where in fact one is dealing with in-between, split, or double identities. Also, it may prove to be an ethnocentric notion constructed from the etic (vs. emic) perspective (as in the case of the Pirahã, cf. Everett 2008), where what looks like the perfect candidate for a Third Space may turn out to be the “first” and “only” space.

Despite that, hybridisation as a process and hybridity as a state do exist and may develop into a cosmopolitan self (cf. Beroš 2016 for some background). In the present paper, hybridity and cosmopolitanism are viewed as linguistic constructs, with the latter being defineable as a “post-hybrid” kind of identity, where a Third-Space context loses its foothold. Possible examples from previous research include cosmopolitanism as “the shaping and remaking of culture” (Spisak 2009: 90), cosmopolitanism in postcolonial fiction (Johansen 2008), in personal non-fiction narratives (Daskalaki 2012), or in the campus experience of international students (Batterton 2015).

This study will look into what this means and how that process may develop by providing examples from literature (e.g. Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, Viet Thanh Nguyen’s *The Refugees*) and current media discourse.

#### References:

- Batterton, Jexica. 2015. *Contextual Identities: Ethnic, National, and Cosmopolitan Identities in International and American Student Roommates*. MA thesis, Bowling Green State University, OH, USA.
- Beroš, Marin. 2016. *Cosmopolitan identity – historical origins and contemporary relevance*. *Tabula* 14: 197–211.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Daskalaki, Maria. 2012. *Personal narratives and cosmopolitan identities. An autobiographical approach*. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 21(4): 430-441.
- Everett, Daniel 2008. *Don’t Sleep, There are Snakes. Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle*. London: Profile Books.
- Johansen, Emily. 2008. *Territorialized Cosmopolitanism: Space, Place and Cosmopolitan Identity*. Doctoral dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
- Spisak, Shannan. 2009. *The evolution of a cosmopolitan identity: Transforming culture*. *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 12(1): 86-91.

## PANEL 1B THURSDAY, 12:30-1:45, RM. F2 007

### “National Allegiance and the Burying of ‘American’ War Dead”

Jena Habegger-Conti, *Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Bergen)*

Gravestones both tell and conceal stories: names and dates, perhaps even a phrase meaningful to the deceased, and occasionally photographs, can give evidence to the identity of the one buried beneath. For some, gravestones also beckon the imagination to fill in missing pieces, to go in search of a fuller story. Such was the case when I was approached by two historians researching war graves in southern Norway. While walking through cemeteries they had come across several white U.S. military-issued gravestones bearing Norwegian names, and more interestingly: “a war grave from the USA that does not look like the others registered, and without a date.” For me, this was the beginning of the formulation of a larger problem that I worked through feverishly over the course of a year: the categorization not just of war graves as “American” or “Norwegian,” but the memorialization for years to come of Norwegian emigrants to the U.S. as “American” or “Norwegian,” regardless of whether or not the person identified more with one nation or another, or even whether they identified with both equally. Adding to the problem of national identity is that while some soldiers had emigrated to America with their families at a young age and were fully integrated into American society, others took US citizenship after having lived in the US for only a few months for the sole purpose of joining the US Army to fight for Norway. And who can say that in either of these cases one soldier was more “American” than another? More importantly, how can this question provide an entryway into a conversation regarding the national identity and citizenship and how we read gravestones or other memorials? This paper will explore these questions with a view to how a transcultural literacy might initiate a “topography of the thinkable” (Rancièrè) that allows us to question both nationalism and cosmopolitanism when reading cultural signs.

**“Those who gave the greatest benefits to mankind’: Representations of Tadeusz Kościuszko and Other ‘Cosmopolitan Patriots’ in the American Press, 1776-1830”**

Zbigniew Mazur, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Amanda Anderson writes that “[c]osmopolitanism has repeatedly emerged at times when the world has suddenly seemed to expand in unassimilable ways” (272). The proliferation of cosmopolitan ideas in the Age of Revolutions has been a well-researched subject. Drawing on the work of Thomas Schlereth, Janet Polasky, Chiara Cillerai, and others, the paper investigates the dichotomy of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the representations of Tadeusz Kościuszko in the American press from the period of the Revolution and the Early Republic. Kościuszko was called a “Citizen of the World”, and William H. Harrison addressed him as one of “those who gave the greatest benefits to mankind”. The paper, rather than to follow the authors who focused on cosmopolitan identities of American Founding Fathers and “itinerant revolutionaries”, studies the use of cosmopolitan, anti-imperialistic, and libertarian discourses in the press representations of the Polish General. The discursive construction of Kościuszko as the hero of the American and Polish Revolutions is contrasted with those of other “Armed Cosmopolitans” and “itinerant revolutionaries” such as Marquis de Lafayette and Baron von Steuben. It is argued that Kościuszko’s public image as a cosmopolitan revolutionary was largely framed in reference to his apparent anti-imperialism and within a notion of Polishness current in eighteenth-century Western culture.

**Bibliography:**

Anderson, Amanda. 1998. The Divided Legacies of Modernity. In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah, and Bruce Robbins, 265–289. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Cillerai Chiara. 2017. *Voices of Cosmopolitanism in Early American Writing and Culture*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Polasky, Janet. 2015. *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Schlereth, Thomas J. 1977. *The Cosmopolitan Ideal*

in *Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

**PANEL 2A**

**THURSDAY, 2:00-3:50, RM. F2 001**

**“Cosmopolitanism and the Right to Opacity”**

Asbjørn Grønstad, University of Bergen

In his project *Facial Weaponization Suite* (2012), the artist and writer Zach Blas intervenes in the debate about biometric methods of identification by constructing a series of nebulous masks drawn from the facial information of a number of subjects. As a result of this process, the masks – which allude to questions of race, gender, sexual orientation, and nationalism – cannot be perceived as human faces by facial recognition technologies. Reminiscent of the ways in which various social movements deploy masks as a form of political communication, Blas’s works could be seen both as a critique of the reduction of the human to data and as an embrace of an ethics of non-transparency. Taking Blas’s project as its point of departure, this paper examines the pertinence of a philosophy of opacity for some of the current challenges facing global migration and values associated with cosmopolitanism. It engages in particular with the ideas of Édouard Glissant (1928-2011), whose work on cultural difference, colonialism, history, and geography produced an understanding of ethical relationships based on a model of opacity. Glissant’s philosophy rejects essentialism and universality and focuses instead on particularity and diversity. His position on ethics revolves around the recognition that opacity, for the non-western subject, functions as a defense mechanism against the objectifying gaze of the other. Clarity is always on the side of colonial power, but history can never be transparent and the problem with clarity is that it inevitably translates (and thus diminishes) the difference of the other into an already known cache of knowledge. To insist on opacity is then to resist the process of reducing the other to some pseudo-universal category. What the concept of opacity fundamentally

contests is the assumption that one has a right to understand the other. Glissant instead advocates an intersubjective, participatory, and intuitive form of understanding capable of grasping its own limitations. After discussing Glissant's philosophy, the paper turns to consider both how the notion of opacity might fruitfully inform a rethinking of cosmopolitanism and how artists might use a poetics of opacity as a tool of political resistance.

### **"Teaching Monocultural Cosmopolitans"**

Rashi Rohatgi, Nord University

Although the Common Core standards for literatures in grades 9-12 refer to several non-American writers and works in the Western canon by name (Shakespeare, Ovid, the Bible, Auden, Brueghel), teachers in the cosmopolitan city, anticipating multicultural classrooms, may wish to interpret the direction to teach one work from outside of the US as an opportunity to bring in a work by a non-Western writer. But who, and how? The urban classroom can also reflect the micro-demographics of the contemporary city, with little to no ethnic or socioeconomic diversity: they are cosmopolitan in theory but not in practice. Research has underlined the fact that students in these environments benefit from seeing themselves in the literature they study; seeing themselves, however, is just the beginning of what English teachers can offer.

The paper is framed by Stallworth, et. al's (2006) guiding principles for teachers and uses as a case study an urban boys' school with a 99% South Asian Muslim student population. Rather than using English lessons to make up for lack of exposure in other aspects of life, I feel that a multicultural education in these cosmopolitan but monocultural English classrooms works towards several aims: firstly, it offers a way for these students to look at race, culture, and heritage in a non-binary formulation. Secondly, adding literature in translation and non-canonical American literature gives students a chance to think about culture, even their own, from a different perspective: one that includes, but does not privilege them. Students can be guided towards at once understanding their privilege and realize that, regardless of the relative privilege they have, they are not asking too much in

wanting to be fully accepted into the society in which live, or the global society in which Islamophobia and racism are prevalent. The opportunity exists to help students contextualize and voice what Pollack, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty (2000) call "the critique of modernity that minoritarian cosmopolitans embody in their historic witness to the twentieth century" and beyond.

### **"AI is a Bitch: The Encoded Uncanny in The Stepford Wives (2004) and EX\_MACHINA (2014)"**

Michael Prince, University of Agder

American thriller author Ira Levin exhibited a significant shift in the presentation of "the uncanny" in his novels from *Rosemary's Baby* (1967) to *The Stepford Wives* (1972). Both novels were best-sellers and were adapted to films at once. In both cases, wives are manipulated and exploited by their husbands in scenarios reminiscent of horror fiction and film, yet the character of the uncanny feeling essential to the genre shifted from the former to the latter novel. In *Rosemary's Baby*, Rosemary Woodhouse is tricked by her husband to producing the spawn of Satan, clearly within the comfortable parameters of the supernatural. However, in *The Stepford Wives*, Joanna Eberhart is replaced by a robot which perfectly imitates what the men of Stepford regard as the essential wifely duties of the suburban housewife. This novel exhibits what I call the "encoded uncanny," an uncanny which is cognitively explainable as involving computer code employed within a technological framework. The encoded uncanny has also been explored by roboticists and game designers in what they term the "uncanny valley," a sudden fall in a sense of affinity between a human and a digitalized representation of a human, either physically as a robot or rendered digitally, as in a CGI sequence.

This talk will address the encoded uncanny in two 21st Century film, the second adaptation of *The Stepford Wives* and *EX\_MACHINA*, films which depict empowered female robots. The films will be compared to argue that the technophobic encoded uncanny of the 1970s has given way to a more technophilic depiction of robots, especially empowered female robots.

## PANEL 2B THURSDAY, 2:00-3:50, RM. F2 007

### **“Teaching Empathy to the Cosmopolitan Reader Through Jim Crow”**

Eir-Anne Edgar, Teacher Education, NTNU

In this talk, I discuss the teaching of twentieth century American literature in the secondary education level classroom and developing empathy in students as global citizens. Specifically, I will discuss lesson plans and strategies for examining a selection of text by Jim Crow era writer Richard Wright, paired with contextual and culturally specific background information. My consideration of this topic stems from recent experience teaching my secondary education level 20th century American literature course, “Outsiders, Misfits, and Weirdos,” which focused on depictions of the Other, developing empathy in the classroom, and fostered writing and assignments that asked students to consider intersectionality in real world settings.

Levinas’ discussion of the Other clearly emphasizes the role of empathy in the development of identity. In thinking about the task of the educator of preparing students as cosmopolitan citizens, it becomes clear that it is imperative that educators develop ways of introducing different historically and culturally specific iterations of the Other to students, as our/their own formulations of self-identity are dependent upon interactions with the Other, even (or perhaps, especially) through interacting with the experience of the Other in literature.

The goal of the lesson (and more broadly, of the talk itself) is to raise key questions about reading, empathy, and the development of the global citizen within the classroom. How do students interact with literature, in terms of developing empathy with the Other? How can educators shape lesson plans that focus on the development of reading skills while also thinking more broadly about students as future global citizens? Furthermore, the lesson asks students to consider what it means to be a citizen, especially when the author and subjects in the text do not enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship. Through teaching African American

literature from the late 19th and early 20th century to a global audience, we can illustrate the connections in our shared humanity.

### **“The Variety of voices in James Weldon Johnson’s God’s Trombones”**

Joelle C. Moen, Brigham Young University-Idaho, 2018-2019 Fulbright Roving Scholar in American Studies

The Harlem Renaissance was a quintessentially American artistic, literary, and musical movement. Yet for all its Americanness, the Harlem Renaissance was made up of artists who were international travelers such as Zora Neale Duke Ellington, and Claude McKay. These international connections and its northern urban setting mark the Harlem Renaissance an example of early twentieth-century cosmopolitan artistic energy.

James Weldon Johnson was among these cosmopolitan Harlem Renaissance writers. Of Bahamian descent, Johnson served as U.S consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua, led the NAACP for a decade, and lobbied Congress for a federal anti-lynching law. While most famous for his novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Johnson spent most of the 1920s, the height of the Harlem Renaissance, creating three important anthologies: *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), and two volumes of the *Book of American Negro Spirituals* (1925, 1926). While these anthologies were significant in establishing and preserving tradition, they may seem an odd choice for a cosmopolitan writer working in 1920s New York. Moreover, Johnson’s major creative work of the 1920s is a collection of his own poetry entitled *God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927). In his preface to the collection, Johnson claims to have created these poems to preserve and “fix” on the page the style and orality of the “old-time Negro preacher.”

Despite Johnson’s claim of capturing the folk sermon of a preacher, the poems within *God’s Trombones* actually use a multiple techniques to create a variety of voices. That Johnson can “do the voices” in *God’s Trombones*, is, of course, reminiscent of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), originally titled “He Do the Police

in *Different Voices*.” In fact, Michael North argues that Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and Johnson’s *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, both published in 1922, are “joined by a rather dense network” (25) of acquaintances, aesthetics, and innovation. Perhaps more importantly, in the fragment, *Sweeny Agonistes* (1926) Eliot adapted Johnson’s early song “Under the Bamboo Tree” (1902) into a fragmented rhyme reminiscent of minstrelsy. Just a year later, with *God’s Trombones*, Johnson pulls his poetry back out of the minstrelsy into which Eliot had thrust it. Johnson re-does the voices to convey human emotions, not stereotypes. By responding to Eliot’s poetry in this way, Johnson places this seemingly traditional collection of poems into the mainstream of avant garde modernism. This paper, then, examines how Johnson weaves together a multiplicity of complex modern voices into the Biblical sermon and reveals *God’s Trombones* to be a perhaps surprising contribution to cosmopolitan literature.

### **“The Racial Limitations of Ideological Cosmopolitanism: Examining the Complicated Proletarian Consciousness of Wright, McKay and Hughes”**

Nahum Welang, Department of Foreign Languages. University of Bergen

“Now I had my flirtation with the Communist party that was dedicated to the liberation of all people — except me. It was, again, my liberation on their terms”

— James Baldwin

A flourishing black proletariat consciousness, Vladimir Lenin believed, was the catalyst needed for a communist revolution in the United States at the turn of the 20th century (Wilson 2017). Deliberate efforts were thus made by the Soviets to reconceptualize American blackness as a cosmopolitan identity possessing proletariat consciousness and agency beyond the borders of America. This rebranding of black American identity charmed African American writers, particularly because they were still battling systemic prejudices at “home” (Wald 2016).

In Richard Wright’s *Native Son*, the Karl Marx-inspired Bois Max is the only white character

who attempts to articulate the nuances of the black American experience. Claude McKay’s “Soviet Russia and the Negro” applauded the Soviets for using arts to promote racial progress, and Langston Hughes’ poetry often portrayed Soviet Russia as a new promised land for Black Americans (“Put one more s in the U.S.A. /To make it Soviet/ Oh, we’ll live to see it yet”).

The early optimism of this union quickly turned sour. In Wright’s “I Tried to Be a Communist,” he accused the Communist Party of the United States of stifling black art by shunning black writers whose works could not be used to promote Soviet Russia’s political propaganda (Fabre 1993). McKay’s cynicism with Soviet Russia was instigated by its support for Benito Mussolini despite his delegitimization of black sovereignty in Ethiopia (Wilson 2017). He chronicled his disillusionment in “Amiable With Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair Between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem.” Hughes, from the onset, had always discussed, albeit subtly, the inferior status of blackness in the communist movement. In “Ballad of Lenin,” he demands equality from Lenin, “Comrade Lenin of Russia/ High in a marble tomb,/ Move over.../ And give me room.”

My paper uses Wright, McKay and Hughes to illustrate the racial limitations of a cosmopolitan consciousness rooted in political ideology. The works of these writers make a strong case for intersectional categorizations within the cosmopolitanism discourse.

### **PANEL 3A FRIDAY, 8:30-9:45, RM. F2 001**

#### **“Cosmopolitanism Re-Thought: Bharati Mukherjee’s *Miss New India*”**

Izabella Kimak, Department of American Literature and Culture, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Cosmopolitanism is a frequently explored topic in immigrant literature, immigrant writers themselves having experienced their share of relocations and uprootings that exposed them to a variety of cultures coexisting together. Bharati Mukherjee, a recently deceased American author

of South Asian background, may be argued to be addressing the problems of cosmopolitanism in much of her literary oeuvre. However, her attitude to cosmopolitanism did not remain constant. In *Jasmine*, her early novel that earned both readerly approval and scholarly objection, cosmopolitanism is celebrated in a somewhat problematic fashion as the novel's trajectory leads from backward India to progressive America. However, in her last novel, *Miss New India*, Mukherjee – arguably, the most recognized and acknowledged of South Asian American authors – paints a more nuanced picture of cosmopolitanism. Situating her novel exclusively within India, mostly in the metropolis of Bangalore, thriving due to the abundance of companies outsourced from the US, Mukherjee shows the dark side of late capitalism and drawbacks of cosmopolitan ideology. In my presentation, I would like to read Mukherjee's criticism of cosmopolitanism through her depiction of houses. Juxtaposing the dilapidated Raj-era Bagehot mansion with the newly-sprouting residential enclaves, such as Dollar Colony, Mukherjee skillfully interweaves India's present and past and poignantly comments on the downside of cosmopolitanism.

**“Trotsky's Rootless Cosmopolitan':  
Acknowledging the Otherness in Russian-  
Jewish-American Literature”**

Julia Gordina, North American Literary and  
Cultural Studies, Universität des Saarlandes

With the advance of globalization and the increased facility of travel and communication, some thinkers consider that the system based on nationalism has become obsolete and that it is time to design a better and more efficient alternative. Canadian political philosopher Charles Blattberg, for example, favors the idea of cosmopolitanism and argues that any viable cosmopolitanism must be based upon a global patriotism. Russian-Jewish Americans do not identify as only Russian-Jewish or as only Americans but establish themselves as cultural hybrids. So too is their multicultural writing, smashing long-time debates about immigration, ethnicity and assimilation, nationalism and cosmopolitanism. German sociologist Ulrich Beck stated that cosmopolitanism should rest

upon fundamental foundations, one of which is “Acknowledging the otherness of those who are culturally different.” St. Petersburg-born New-Yorker Gary Shteyngart follows the same trajectory. He has been the first author to empower and maintain Russian-Jewish identity in American literature through metaphors of the exotic, ethnic and the Oriental.

In this paper, I examine Gary Shteyngart's novels *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, *Absurdistan* and *Super Sad True Love Story*. I argue that working within popular Western genres, such as travelogue and SF, Shteyngart reverses the power roles in the game of Orientalism. He produces and reinterprets the same kind of essentialized images of what is presumed to be his own heritage, engaging thus in self-orientalism, a concept stemming from the Malaysian-American anthropologist Aihwa Ong's writing about Oriental reinterpretation of Western image of the East. Portraying all his Eastern and Western characters equally, Shteyngart rejects the paradigm of essential difference that makes it ‘natural’ for the West to deal with ‘the rest of the world’ differently from the way they deal with each other. In other words, Shteyngart insists ‘the rest of the world’ be understood by the West in the same terms the West understands itself and gives voice to an ethnic group, previously underrepresented on literary stage.

**PANEL 3B**

**FRIDAY, 8:30-9:45, RM. F2 001**

**“Laestadianism as Salvation and Cosmopolitan  
as Road to Hell in Hanna Pylväinen's *We Sinners*  
(2012)”**

Ellen Marie Jensen, PhD Candidate, UiT Arctic  
University of Norway

Named for its founder, the 19th century Lutheran reformer Lars Levi Laestadius, Laestadianism is a form of pietistic fundamentalist Lutheranism that eschews many aspects of modern life or the “worldly.” Everyday features of modern life—television, movies, music with a beat, birth control, make-up, neckties, and especially alcohol—are strictly avoided and transgressions are viewed as grave sins. The Laestadian concept

of “worldly” closely aligns with a particular conceptualization of cosmopolitanism with its expansive subjectivity and consumerist life-style. In other words, subjectivity outside of the confines of the tightly woven exclusivist Laestadian faith with its anti-materialist and communal values.

Hanna Pylväinen’s critically acclaimed and award-winning debut novel *We Sinners* was the first literary work depicting Laestadianism in North America. A poly-focal narrative written from a secular standpoint, *We Sinners* follows nine members of a modern Laestadian family, the Rovaniemis, as they question their faith and belonging in the American Midwest.

An adage in the North American Laestadian community is: “my church is my refuge, and my church is my prison.” The major tension facing the Rovaniemis is whether to “stay” in the confines of the community of believers, with its mostly unwritten rules and strict tenets, or “leave” the faith and join the cosmopolitan world. But leaving the faith and joining the cosmopolitan world comes at the almost unbearable price of losing family ties and community. This paper follows the “prison/refuge” tension from a gendered perspective exemplified through four female characters in *We Sinners* and poses the questions: Is consumerist American cosmopolitanism really “freedom” for the women who leave? And where does female agency figure into Laestadian fundamentalism’s prison/refuge duality?

### **“New Orthodoxy: Revisiting T.S. Eliot’s Notes Towards the Definition of Culture”**

Jamie Callison, Nord University

For the philosopher Charles Taylor, religion in the world today is unavoidably cosmopolitan; believers and non-believers alike recognize that their particular worldviews are not part of a single hierarchical order, but rather contrast and conflict with those held by others. Taylor’s understanding of the modern religious perspectives provides a vantage point on what has often been viewed as a defiantly noncosmopolitan work of social criticism: T.S. Eliot’s *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. In returning to this text, I draw out

Eliot’s engagement with the situation Taylor describes.

In particular, I highlight Eliot’s critique of Malinowski’s functionalist school of anthropology, exploring how, in Eliot’s view, their concerns with the integration of society and religion in cultures outside Europe and the US inadvertently impoverished the language available for discussions of institutional religion. I explore Eliot’s interest in the individual believer making sense of his or her faith in the context of modernity, and argue that a deeper engagement with religious subjectivity can help address some of the challenges associated with cosmopolitanism.

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2 FRIDAY, 10:00-11:00, RM. B2 002**

### **“Cosmopolitanism Otherwise”**

Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwanko (Vanderbilt University)

As women have moved across national borders, whether physically as migrants, workers, small business owners, expatriates, tourists (heritage and leisure), scholars, or psychologically, as individuals dreaming of one day “taking a tour” (Jamaica Kincaid), they have pondered, verbally as well as in print, the catalysts, implications, and foremothers of their border crossings. Through in-depth examinations of the treatment of the international in autobiography, fiction, poetry, scholarly writing, and music lyrics by women, especially Afro-descendent women, we will consider the benefits and the drawbacks of employing cosmopolitanism as a way of reading and discussing women’s cross-border movements.

## **PANEL 4A FRIDAY, 12:00-1:50, RM. F2 001**

### **Refugee literature and the verse novel for deep learning with teenagers in ELT**

Janice Bland, Nord University

In this paper I discuss the refugee experience in verse novels, a fairly new format that is

highly promising for ELT. I argue that the most compelling verse novels not only offer the vivid depth of feeling that poetry can deliver, they are also convincing for secondary-school students as story, while they recreate history from embodied, lived experience of lost cultural identity, Othering and abjection, but also hope.

I will discuss Helen Frost's *The Braid* (2006), set at the time of the Highland Clearances. Two Scottish sisters, forced to part, symbolically braid their hair, and throughout the exquisite verse the braided hair is echoed by the poetry of the sisters' alternating voices when one of them must emigrate to Nova Scotia and the other stays behind on the ruggedly beautiful Western Isles of Scotland. Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave* (2007) is an endearing and very accessible refugee story, told with humour and humanity, as well as wonderfully strange images of Minnesota from the puzzled perspective of a Sudanese boy. The characterization is interwoven with pain: for the loss of family, cultural identity and cultural heritage.

Thanhha Lai's *Inside Out & Back Again* (2011) is an autobiographical story of loss. The sense of place and belonging in the cityscapes of Saigon, the familiar foods and papaya fruits of Vietnam, are replaced with settings in Alabama that are so disembodied to the refugee family they seem surreal:

Green mats of grass  
in front of every house.  
Vast windows  
in front of sealed curtains.  
Cement lanes where  
no one walks.  
[...]  
Clean, quiet  
loneliness.

The rhythm of language in the refugee verse novel reflects disrupted experience; the fierce emotions of adolescence reverberates in the omissions, lingering in the moment of what can be said and what can only be felt. The slower reading of poetry works well for deep reading, and readers are forced to pay attention to every word.

## **“Reading about Others ´ Places: Choosing Cosmopolitanism vs not Having a Choice”**

Cassandra Falke, Professor of English Literature, UiT-The Arctic University of Norway

Bill Ascroft notes that writings about cosmopolitanism have never solved “the problem of who can be allowed into the cosmopolitan club, nor does it resolve the incipient problem of cosmopolitan theory – the attempt by the (mainly) US academy to reinstate the imperial metropolis at the center of post-colonial discussion” (76). My paper will address two works of American immigrant fiction that dramatize the tension between those who are in and those who are out of the cosmopolitan club by portraying an immigrant narrator moving between a US or British, economically-secure, cosmopolitan space and a violent, post-colonial region in which free movement is circumscribed. Olanna, in Chimamanda Adichie ´s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, received her education in London, but has returned to her native Nigerian when the Biafran fight for independence begins. Because her family ´s money would allow her to escape Nigeria during the conflict and because her background, education and university professorship bring her into contact with the international middle and upper classes resident in Nsukka and Lagos, Olanna occupies a cosmopolitan subject position. Through the oppression of the Igbo during the war, her cosmopolitan privileges are gradually stripped away. Through Olanna, Adichie exposes the privilege that cosmopolitanism both flaunts and denies while still upholding its ethical goals. In contrast to this, Khaled Hosseini ´s novel *The Kite Runner* features a narrator, Amir, who becomes a cosmopolitan subject only after fleeing his home country of Afghanistan. After a difficult escape from the Taliban, he eventually marries and becomes a successful novelist in Fremont, California. Hosseini challenges the utopian vision of cosmopolitan values effecting real political change more directly than Adichie by focusing less on humanitarian relief such as schooling and food distribution and more on violence and failed interventions. Amir returns to Afghanistan to save his now-grown childhood friend, Hassan, but fails. He returns to California instead with Hassan ´s traumatized and non-verbal son, Sohrab. It is unclear whether any

amount of hospitality and love in Sohrab's new home will ever enable him function independently, much less from a position of cosmopolitan responsibility.

Anthony Kwame Appiah notes that migrancy "can be hateful, if coerced" but "can be celebrated when it flows from the free decisions of individuals or of group" (618). Reading immigrant fiction deploys both of these dynamics – a free decision for the reader but a hateful history of coerced displacement. My readings of the novels themselves will thus be followed by a theoretical reflection of the ways readers imaginatively navigate positions of being in and out of the cosmopolitan club. As cosmopolitan readers, we expand our own knowledge and empathic capability through the tragedies of people who do not have that opportunity themselves. The future of Appiah's concept of cosmopolitan ethics depends, I argue, on recognizing the imbalance in the self-other relationship when only one of those relational selves enjoys a position of cosmopolitan privilege.

### **"Cosmopolitan Promises and Regional Singularity"**

Lene Johannessen, University of Bergen

Early voices of a cosmopolitan promise of "America" is found already in Crèvecoeur's proclamation in 1782 that, "Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men" and, in a curious causal reversal, "the Americans were once scattered all over Europe ..." One later, explicit formulation comes with Randolph Bourne's 1916 attack on the melting pot model, announcing its failure: the American (Bourne, like Crèvecoeur, summons a "new man") is "a colonial of the world. Colonialism has grown into cosmopolitanism, and his motherland is no one nation, but all who have anything life enhancing to offer to the spirit" (6). Bourne's argument calls for an Americanism that, rather than insisting on leaving behind all "ancient prejudices and manners" (Crèvecoeur) calls for "breathing a larger air" of a cosmopolitan America in which cultural distinctions of native cultures cohabit and complement each other. The key to success for Bourne lies in the second generation, the city, and in education, and thus anticipates some of the tenets underlying

sociologist David Goodhart's recent coinage of Anywheres and Somewheres (2017). Goodhart's conceptualization works to explain Brexit (and Trump) and turns on the division of people, briefly stated, according to elaborations on achieved (Anywheres) and ascribed (Somewheres) identities in a globalized world. In that context, traces of Bourne's cosmopolitan ideal comes fraught with an uneasy and ignored balance between the two, relentlessly trailing the ensuing legacies of Eudora Welty's "brimming frame" and singular regionalisms: for all its transnationalism, American emplaced points of view turn cosmo into a strangely internal affair. One, perhaps unlikely illustration of such admission is Paul Beatty's deeply satirical *The Sellout* (2015), where the ultimate consequences of regional singularity and the call from and for Somewhere is taken to an extreme.

## **PANEL 4B FRIDAY, 12:00-1:50, RM. F2 007**

### **"Everyday Cosmopolitanism of International Students"**

On Hee Choi, University of Bristol

The longitudinal research explores the influence of cosmopolitanism imbued in higher education curriculum through four international students' trajectories in a UK university. Not only higher education but also social media over digital space have sparked the sense of belonging to a more extensive global community based on cosmopolitanism.

Higher education institutions along with digital space in this research are perceived as transnational space. Transnational space is not bound to locality but open to diversity in culture, race and religion. In this sense, cosmopolitanism fits into the ethos of transnational space in the era of globalisation. However, in reality, abstract and ideal cosmopolitanism is diversely interpreted according to individual dispositions as well as contextuality. While abandoning initial cosmopolitan aspirations and giving way to pragmatic issues of reality related to future careers, international students have developed into modified cosmopolitanism focusing on everyday lived experiences.

In this sense, this study deals with a wide range of existing discourse about cosmopolitanism from Hannerz [1990: 2006], Nussbaum [1994], Appiah [1996], and Beck [2002], to the currently discussed everyday/ ordinary cosmopolitanism. I am most interested in annexing the recent literature to international students' lived experiences as a case of cosmopolitanism below. This study has collected multimodal data such as texts and photos from interviews, observation, and journals for triangulation and the data was analysed with a thematic approach. This presentation will bring specific quotes from documents of interviews and observation that I carried out for two years to portray changes of international students' perceptions of cosmopolitanism and their own identification as cosmopolitan.

The study's findings show that international students produce their own individual space unfettered to the idealism of transnational space through a new understanding of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan, and they make an effort to figure out how to integrate with 'others' in the era of globalisation.

### **"The discussion is interminable": Framing the American Literature Survey Course Around Conversations"**

Matthew Teutsch, Auburn University, 2018-2019  
Fulbright Scholar, University of Bergen]

One of the main hurdles I face when teaching American literature survey courses comes down to how the amount of representative voices that I present to students. This causes me to consider who and how to incorporate various perspectives into the class. I achieve multiple perspectives in the classroom by incorporating two very specific pedagogical techniques/assignments into my classroom that present students with voices that counter the traditional voices of American literary history. Through my pedagogy, I present students with a multifaceted, cosmopolitan view of American literature that shows the linkages between disparate groups within the nation. In my paper, I will discuss two assignments that regularly incorporate into my American literature survey courses. The first of these assignments pulls from rhetoric/composition studies and

uses Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor as a jumping off point. Rather than organizing my classes in a chronological manner, I construct them around conversations. As such, I have students consider the ways that authors speak to one another across time and the ways that they challenge prevalent ideas that seek to keep some in subjection. While I do this with numerous authors, I will focus on an assignment I use when discussing David Walker and Thomas Jefferson. For this assignment, I have students read multiple texts by other authors to highlight the wide scope of the conversation that each author engages within. Along with the above assignment, I also have students work with archival materials. Students must use archival materials and relate them back to texts/authors we read in class. Through this assignment, I reinforce for students the ways that the authors we read are involved in broader historical conversations. This also provides students with access to non-canonized or literary voices, thus presenting them with broader perspectives than the ones contained within the pages of the anthology. Overall, my paper will highlight how I incorporate these assignments into my classroom and how these assignments lead students to a broader understanding and respect for those around them.

### **"From Palestinian to Cosmopolitan: Detachment from homeland in Hala Alyan's Salt Houses"** Helle Marie Andresen, University of Agder

Hala Alyan's debut novel *Salt Houses* is about belonging anywhere, and nowhere. Following a displaced Palestinian family through four generations worth of the Palestinian diaspora, the novel depicts the struggle of locating a sense of home and belonging in the midst of turbulent political landscapes. Whereas the first and second generations of the refugees depicted in the novel maintain a strong connection to Palestine, the following generations are increasingly detached from their Palestinian heritage and perceive, as the title of the novel implies, houses and homes to be as fragile as if they were built out of salt. In this presentation I will place *Salt Houses* within the theoretical framework of cosmopolitanism. As Bruce Robbins and Paulo Lemos Horta note in their introduction to *Cosmopolitanisms*, some

collectives have had 'cosmopolitanism thrust upon them by traumatic histories of dislocation and dispossession' (3). Indeed, Palestinians are haunted by a traumatic history of dislocation from their homes and, as Salt Houses describes, this dislocation is often repeated as wars erupt time and time again across the Middle East. However, as I will show in my presentation, the generational form and large time scale of Alyan's novel helps convey a perspective on the Palestinian diaspora that is not just concerned with preserving Palestinian heritage and the right to return. Rather, the novel suggests a steady detachment from that one, particular national homeland, towards belonging in a cosmopolitan landscape of intertwining cultures, and drawing on Julianne Hammer's studies of Palestinian repatriation, I will argue that ultimately, Salt Houses portray a generational move from Palestinian refugee to cosmopolitan citizen.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3 FRIDAY, 2:05-3:05, RM. B2 002

#### **"The Future of Cosmopolitanism? Examples from the Americas"**

Nicole Waller (University of Potsdam)

My contribution will build on the Potsdam RTG's conception of "minor cosmopolitanisms," namely the acknowledgement of a multitude of locally and historically specific ways of envisioning a world and conceptualizing a sense of belonging beyond the nation. In this context, both the imperial histories of European conceptions of cosmopolitanism and the anti-, de- and postcolonial challenges and alternatives to these histories must be taken into account.

In this spirit, I will examine theories and practices that engage in acts of worlding and question current forms of the nation-state, but may nevertheless sit uneasily even with contemporary revisions of cosmopolitanism. Examples will be drawn both from the field of Caribbean studies and the field of Indigenous studies in the Americas. In some Caribbean texts, the Caribbean as a "meta-archipelago" (Benítez-Rojo) is connected to places all over the world via complex histories

of colonization and displacement, resulting in the necessity of what Benítez-Rojo calls multiple readings that accommodate both anti-colonial nationalism and global conceptions beyond the nation. In the work of anthropologist Yarimar Bonilla, the contemporary Caribbean appears both as a space of failed sovereignty and as the site of envisioning non-sovereign futures. In indigenous studies, the ongoing existence of settler-colonialism is frequently at the center of analysis, often resulting in critiques of celebrations of multiculturalism and immigration that fail to acknowledge the urgency of decolonization. In the U.S. context, scholars like Jodi Byrd or Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang are currently engaged in sorting through the connections and "incommensurabilities" of postcolonial and multicultural versions of cosmopolitanism with Native agendas of decolonization. In Indigenous conceptions of community and polity, there are multiple themes that both reverberate with and trouble theories of cosmopolitanism: a concern with planetary stewardship, the questioning of Euro-American conceptions of the nation-state, the revisiting of indigenous epistemologies of travel and connection, but also examples of the necessity of rootedness, sovereignty, and indigenous nationhood.

My presentation will give an overview of some of the ways in which these theories and practices both enrich contemporary debates on cosmopolitanisms and, at the same time, have the potential to radically rethink or even surpass notions of the cosmopolitan as relevant for conceptions of planetary futures.

### PANEL 5 SATURDAY, 9:00-10:15, RM. F2 001

#### **"Let's Stop Teaching the 100-level American Literature Survey in Norway (in the Name of Cosmopolitanism?)"**

Stephen Dougherty, University of Agder

The American Literature survey was introduced to the curriculum in Norway, at the University of Oslo, following World War I. The first Norwegian

chair in American literature was created at the University of Oslo in 1946, a date which underscores the connection between political and pedagogical motives for curricular decisions. It was politic that in 1946 the English program at the flagship educational institution in Norway would showcase U.S. literature alongside English literature; and perhaps few people would have argued in 1946 that the nation state should not constitute a standard frame within which to investigate what literature signified, and how it signified.

In our own day it is (relatively) easier to see things in a different light. By its very nature, the national literature survey perpetuates in the minds of our students a nineteenth-century vision of separate national destinies. It suggests that the nation state is the ultimate horizon for both individual creative motivation and the collective significance, or the meaning, of literature. Our Norwegian students attend classes with young people studying in Norway from around Europe, and increasingly, from around the world. Yet they are urged through the very form of the national literature survey to think in terms of national stories, national experiences, and national voices. This misrepresents a great deal about literature, human creativity, and the world around us.

Why should we feel responsibility for telling the American story? Undoubtedly, the nation state is still a vital coordinate for orientation in all sorts of ways: political, economic, cultural, and pedagogical. However, we cannot simply get away with stating this neutrally, or objectively. We help to perpetuate the pedagogical centrality of the nation state by persisting in teaching the national literature survey. We drill it into our students' heads that the correct way to understand how literature means something is by subordinating it to the figure of the nation. Certainly, the survey mission is not to proselytize. Yet in a way we do precisely that. We show students that the story of America as revealed through the record of U.S. literature is the most important thing we can think of educating them about.

## **“To Cheer Up Slaves and Horrify Despots”: American Literature and the Cosmopolitan Ideal”**

Ken R. Hanssen, Nord University

In a much publicized 2008 interview, Horace Engdahl, the imperious permanent secretary to the Swedish Academy, openly dismissed recent American literature for being “too isolated, too insular,” and even “ignorant,” not participating in the larger dialogues of western culture. Engdahl was referring to a lack of engagement with foreign literature[s], but his statements also implied a sense of disappointment in the abandonment of a cosmopolitan perspective and a collective voice in favor of subjective, introspective self-examination — or, to put it in plain English, omphaloskepsis. Doubtless we may sniff indignantly at the discrimination of such a rarefied palate, but Engdahl does raise a question of urgency to those of us engaged in the essentially parasitic enterprise of teaching American literature to Scandinavian students. This is a time in which the very identity and definition of English as a subject is up for discussion, both at the disciplinary and political levels of discourse, and it is as such necessary to consider what place remains in the second-language classroom for an ostensibly provincial national literature preoccupied with whiskey, women, and grievously violated watermelons. In this paper, I will attempt to answer Engdahl, and in so doing address the larger question of how English, beyond serving as a convenient lingua franca, also offers a shared intellectual framework for rehearsing the common challenges that confront us — whether emotional, ethical, social, or political. In this frictionless age of individually tailored newsfeeds, a shared engagement with what Whitman termed “the powerful language of resistance” seems more imperative than ever, and it may well be that it is exactly through its exploration of the cultural and specifically the literary tradition of the United States that the subject of English is allowed to serve its noblest formative function, that of framing a cosmopolitan purview.

The American Studies Association of Norway (ASANOR) would like to thank the University of Agder Faculty of Humanities and Education, the UiA Scholarship for Visiting Scholars, and the U.S. Embassy in Oslo for their generous financial support.



**U.S. Embassy in Norway**



**UNIVERSITY OF AGDER**  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION













# TRANSPORTATION

## Bus

Bus stop: UiA / Spicheren

To / from the city center:

Most buses to and from downtown run through the university

All of the M-buses departing from Henrik Wergelands gate pl. C will take you to the university.

Link to AKT's travel planner: <http://akt.no/reise/>

Link to AKT's mobile app: <http://akt.no/info/reise/akt-reiseplanlegger-mobilapp/>

To / from Kjevik airport:

Bus number 35 and FLY drive from Kjevik to the university at approx. 20-minute drive. These also drive on to the city center.

## Taxi

Agder Taxi, Ph.: 3800 2000

Taxi Sør, Ph.: 3802 8000

